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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/E, A/S CARSON AND PRM

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - OPPORTUNITIES FOR PD ENGAGEMENT WITH DADAAB

REFUGEES

Summary

¶11. (SBU) The residents of Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, home to more than 270,000 mostly Somali refugees, demonstrated a wide range of activities aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation among Somalis in Dadaab and in Somalia at large. These worthy projects certainly merit support, and offer great prospect for public diplomacy engagement with a large population of Somalis, many of whom are disaffected but apparently receptive to U.S. engagement. This message offers examples of activities we could support with varying degrees of funds. The refugees' views on Somalia's future and United States policy on Somalia will be reported via septels. End summary.

270,000 Disaffected Somalis

¶12. (SBU) A Somalia Unit officer, accompanied by a visiting AF/PDPA officer, traveled to Dadaab refugee camp from May 11-13 to survey the views of the refugees regarding U.S. policy toward Somalia, the current and future political prospects for Somalia, and opportunities for public diplomacy engagement with the refugees. The Dadaab refugee camp is in fact three separate camps - Ifo, Dagahaley, and Hagadera - and is located approximately 80 kilometers from the border with Somalia in Kenya's Northeast Province. The camp was created in 1991 with capacity for 90,000 refugees. The camp currently houses over 270,000 registered refugees, with more arriving daily in spite of the official closure of the Kenya-Somalia border.

Public Diplomacy Opportunities

¶13. (SBU) Following is a list of opportunities for public diplomacy engagement with the Dadaab refugee population. This list is not comprehensive, but offers examples of activities we might back with varying degrees of budgetary support. The groups involved uniformly stated that the human resources, including the determination and intellect required, were readily available, and that relatively small bits of financial support would boost these efforts.

- Radio programming (\$400,000, or a portion thereof): The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has finally secured permission from the Government of Kenya to establish

and broadcast radio programming from Dadaab. The project was previously funded but the money was re-allocated due to GOK delays in approving the project. UNHCR's project envisions a studio in Dadaab at which the refugees would develop radio programs to be broadcast over StarFM, a station with which post has an excellent relationship, during StarFM's idle hours. If post had funds to support this initiative, we could dictate the themes of programs developed and targeted at this audience of 270,000 Somalis.

- Hagadera soccer league (\$4,000 or more): A group of youth, in partnership with the NGO CARE, operates a soccer league of 80 teams of 23 members each. The teams run their soccer league under the rubric of youth leadership and conflict mediation. For example, we met the coach of one team who described how the youth are trained to resolve conflict in the context of their soccer matches. The league could use any amount of equipment. We envision starting with jerseys for each of the 1,840 members. If budget allowed, we could provide soccer balls, cleats, or field upkeep, all emblazoned with messages of peace and reconciliation.

- Dagahaley Drama Group (\$200 or more): This group presented us with approximately thirty minutes of their drama, song, and poetry. The group operates with the most rudimentary of costumes and could use anything from simple costumes to a microphone setup to a facility for drama practice and rehearsal. The group could also benefit from the ability to move among the camps to present their work. The group presents messages of peace and reconciliation, and would likely be receptive to input on their performances in conjunction with any support we could offer.

- Youth Action for Peace Group: This initiative, which spans all three camps, is focused on youth empowerment, self-reliance, and

NAIROBI 00001032 002 OF 002

independence. The projects, a select few of which will be funded by a CARE-associated volunteer, are supported by matching funds to complement the funds raised by the applicant.

- Community Peace and Security Team (CPST) Leaders (multiples of approximately \$100): The CSM leaders at Ifo camp were beneficiaries of bicycles, boots, and reflective vests from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). However, the group notes that their community policing efforts could benefit from even more equipment, especially bicycles. Providing bikes and other equipment (possibly with USG branding) would advance our public diplomacy efforts while helping improve security in the camps.

- Community Self Management (CSM) Leaders: These groups perform conflict resolution activities for disputes and petty crimes. The CSM group in Hagadera noted that they have 30 CSM officers for over 100,000 refugees in that section of the camp. As such, a CSM officer might require two hours to travel on foot to assist at the scene of a dispute. Contributions to these groups would go toward transportation, such as bicycles.

Comment

¶4. (SBU) Post believes that public diplomacy support for some or all of these worthy initiatives would give us a valuable entre into an audience of 270,000 Somalis, many of whom are otherwise disaffected and unhappy. While we intend to use our existing and limited programming budget to reach into Somalia, any additional funding offered would likely be considered for direction to the Dadaab refugee camps. This population has both the ability to reach back into Somalia with news of our good works and the potential to return to Somalia en masse if and when the situation in their country allows. Any public diplomacy programming we undertake in Dadaab is likely to have positive effects.

RANNEBERGER